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Dockets Management Branch

HFA-305

Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Docket No. 98F-0165

RE: Irradiation in the Production, Processing and Handling of Eggs

August 4, 2000

Dear Sir or Madam,

It is outrageous and appalling to hear that irradiation is being seriously considered as a plausible, reasonable method to make eggs safer for human consumption. Irradiation only concerns eggs which are already unsafe, and does not deal with the root source of the problem. It is a way of mopping up after the disgusting husbandry practiced by large-scale egg farmers, who today more closely resemble businessmen selling a product than mindful guardians providing humanity with our most basic requirement for life. Hens are not machines, and never will be, no matter how they are immobilized, caged, crowded, dosed with antibiotics, subjected to stressful lighting, or cruelly starved. Unhealthy, unhappy hens produce sick eggs, period.

Millions of years of evolution have perfected the egg's defenses against bacteria. The survival of the growing chick is at stake. We have undone all that nature provided in only a few decades. The best and only way to make eggs clean and wholesome so that people can feed them to their families without worry is to let hens range in spacious, low density conditions. Left unmedicated, unstressed, and with their bodies unmolested, they will produce high quality, fantastic tasting eggs for what appears like much less trouble than what the average factory farmer goes through.

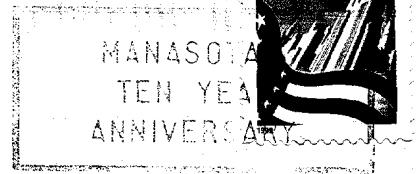
Irradiation is not a solution to the problem of unsafe eggs. It only brings on more complications and questions such as a deteriorated nutritional value and aesthetic quality, not to mention the unknown dangers, like cancer, which have shown up in studies of laboratory animals consuming irradiated food.

Please halt the legalization of egg irradiation and allow a public hearing to inform the people whose lives will be affected in ways in which they may not be willing to accept.

Sincerely,

Julie Van Horn
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